

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 17055 01 OF 03 210817Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 HA-05 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 TRSE-00 BIB-01 IO-13 /084 W
-----005693 210841Z /10

R 210754Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4588
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USNATO
USICA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 17055

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, UR
SUBJECT: THE HELSINKI MONITORING GROUP TRIALS:
AN EVALUATION

REF: (A) MOSCOW 15961, (B) MOSCOW 15744, (C) 77 MOSCOW
2042, (D) 77 MOSCOW 13194

SUMMARY: TRIALS OF ORLOV, GINZBURG, SHCHARANSKIY AND
OTHER CSCE MONITORING GROUP MEMBERS ARE LOGICAL
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 17055 01 OF 03 210817Z

CONSEQUENCE OF CRACKDOWN BEGUN IN LATE 1976 OR EARLY
1977 AGAINST THIS MANIFESTATION OF DISSENT. IN
DOMESTIC TERMS, TRIALS UNDOUBTEDLY WERE INTENDED AS
A HARSH WARNING TO REFUSENIKS AND DISSIDENTS AGAINST
ACTIVISM, PARTICULARLY UNDER THE BANNER OF THE HEL-
SINKI FINAL ACT, AND AGAINST COUNTING ON WESTERN SUPPORT
FOR PROTECTION. FOR THE BROADER POPULATION, THE

EXERCISE PROVIDES A SOMBER REMINDER OF PERNICIOUS EFFECTS OF FOREIGN INFLUENCES. TIMING OF TRIALS AND SEVERITY OF SENTENCES UNDERLINE THE DELIBERATE MESSAGE THAT SOVIET UNION WILL HANDLE ITS INTERNAL PROBLEM OF DISSENT AS IT SEES FIT, REGARDLESS OF POSSIBLE NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON SOVIET RELATIONS WITH US AND OTHER CSCE COUNTRIES. AT SAME TIME, "RESTRAINT" OF TASS AND SOVIET DOMESTIC NEWS MEDIA IN NOT SPECIFICALLY NAMING U.S., SUGGESTS SOVIETS MAY BE TRYING TO SIGNAL A WILLINGNESS TO EXERCISE A MODICUM OF RESTRAINT IN PUBLIC HANDLING OF "ESPIONAGE" CASES SO AS NOT TO EXACERBATE RELATIONS UNNECESSARILY. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HAVING THUS HAD THE PSYCHOLOGICAL GRATIFICATION OF DEMONSTRATING BOTH TOUGHNESS AND "RESTRAINT", THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP MAY BE MORE PREPARED TO LIMIT THE LONGER TERM FOREIGN POLICY COSTS OF THE TRIALS AND SENTENCES. THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND REFUSENIK MOVEMENTS HAVE BEEN SEVERELY HURT BY EIGHTEEN MONTHS LONG CAMPAIGN AGAINST THEM, BUT WILL CONTINUE TO CAUSE MOSCOW FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS, WHICH THE REGIME IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO TRY TO LIMIT BY IMPRISONMENT, INTERNAL EXILE OR FORCED EMIGRATION OF NEWLY ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE MEMBERS. ARREST OF SAKHAROV AT SOME POINT IS NOT OUT OF QUESTION, BUT WE SEE NO SIGNS THAT GROUNDWORK IS CURRENTLY BEING LAID FOR IT. A MAJOR PART OF REPRESSION EFFORT, ILLUSTRATED

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 17055 01 OF 03 210817Z

DURING CURRENT TRIALS, REMAINS TO CUT LINKS BETWEEN DISSIDENTS AND REFUSENIKS ON ONE HAND AND WESTERN DIPLOMATS AND JOURNALISTS ON THE OTHER. END SUMMARY.

1. AS WE HAVE EARLIER REPORTED, THE TRIALS OF ORLOV, GINZBURG, SHCHARANSKIY AND OTHER MEMBERS OF CSCE MONITORING GROUPS ARE THE LOGICAL RESULT OF THE CRACKDOWN WHICH COMMENCED IN DECEMBER 1976 OR JANUARY 1977, AND WHICH WAS LAUNCHED PRIMARILY AGAINST THE "ORLOV IDEA" OF MONITORING SOVIET COMPLIANCE WITH THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT A POLITICAL DECISION WAS TAKEN AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL TO APPROVE SUCH A CRACKDOWN. AS THE RECENT ARRESTS OF PODRABINEK AND SLEPAK SUGGEST, THE CRACKDOWN APPARENTLY IS STILL IN FORCE. THIS CABLE OUTLINES OUR THOUGHTS ON WHY THE CURRENT TRIALS, COMPRISING THE LATEST AND MOST DRAMATIC CHAPTER OF THE CRACKDOWN, WERE PLAYED OUT AS THEY WERE.

2. LEADERSHIP'S INTENTIONS: DOMESTICALLY. BY IMPOSING HARSH SENTENCES ON ALL FOUR RECENTLY TRIED HELSINKI GROUP MEMBERS (ORLOV, GINZBURG, SHCHARANSKIY,

AND PYATKUS), SOVIET AUTHORITIES CLEARLY INTENDED TO REPRESS DISSIDENT AND REFUSENIK ACTIVITY BY CONVINCINGLY DEMONSTRATING TO OTHER ACTIVISTS AND POTENTIAL ACTIVISTS THE DIRE CONSEQUENCES OF BEING TOO PROMINENT OR EFFECTIVE IN THEIR ACTIVITIES. AN INTEGRAL PART OF THIS EXERCISE WAS TO UNDERLINE THE SHARP LIMITS OF PROTECTION THAT WESTERN ATTENTION AND SUPPORT CAN PROVIDE. BY THE WAY THEY CONDUCTED THE PROSECUTION ITSELF --I.E., BY DEVOTING GREAT EFFORT TO IMPUGNING SEVERAL OF THE DEFENDANTS' MORAL

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 17055 02 OF 03 210825Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 HA-05 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 BIB-01 /084 W

-----005834 210841Z /10

R 210754Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4589

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USNATO

USICA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 MOSCOW 17055

CHARACTER AND BY "IDENTIFYING" SIMILAR PERSONALITY TRAITS IN FILATOV AND SHCHARANSKIY WHICH PURPORTEDLY LED THEM TO THEIR "CRIMES"--THE SOVIETS APPARENTLY INTENDED TO ROB THEM OF ANY GLAMOR WHICH MIGHT ACCRUE TO THEM AS THEIR CASES WERE INTERPRETED BY FOREIGN MEDIA, AND TO DEMONSTRATE THE DANGERS INHERENT IN

BECOMING ENSNARED BY THESE SAME MEDIA.

3. PREVIOUS AUTHORITATIVE EXPOSITIONS OF THE KREMLIN'S
VIEW OF DISSENT --THE LENGTHY PRAVDA STATEMENT OF
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 17055 02 OF 03 210825Z

FEBRUARY 1977 (REFTEL C) AND KGB CHIEF ANDROPOV'S
SPEECH IN SEPTEMBER 1977 (REFTEL D) --HAVE NOT
GONE QUITE AS FAR IN ATTEMPTING TO DEMONSTRATE THE
PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISM BY WHICH HARMFUL FOREIGN
INFLUENCES PRESUMABLY LEAD TO ANTI-SOVIET ACTS. IN
THE OFFICIAL ANALYSIS OF DISSENT AND TREASON ARISING
OUT OF THE CURRENT TRIALS AND COMMENTARY ON THEM,
MORAL WEAKNESS IS SEEN AS THE SOIL, FOREIGN INFLUENCE
AS THE SEED. THUS, ALTHOUGH THERE IS THE INFERENCE
THAT THE RIGHT THINKING AND MORALLY STRONG SOVIET
CITIZEN WILL NOT BE SUBVERTED BY FOREIGN INFLUENCES,
THERE IS ALSO THE CLEAR SUGGESTION THAT SUCH IN-
FLUENCES ARE INHERENTLY PENICIOUS AND A SOURCE OF
DANGER TO THE WEAK OR UNWARY. INDEED, THERE IS
ALMOST A "SLIPPERY SLOPE" ARGUMENT HERE, IN WHICH
FOREIGN INFLUENCES FEEDING ON WEAK CHARACTER LEAD
VIRTUALLY INEVITABLY TO TREASON. THIS EQUATION OF
FOREIGN INFLUENCES WITH DEGRADATION AND BETRAYAL IS
AN UGLY, BUT NOT NECESSARILY INEFFECTIVE APPEAL
TO THE MORE ATAVISTIC IMPULSES AND ETHNOCENTRIC
TRADITIONS OF RUSSIAN CULTURE.

4. LEADERSHIP'S INTENTIONS: INTERNATIONALLY. THE
FAILURE BY THE SOVIET MEDIA TO IMPLICATE SPECIFICALLY
THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT OR ANY OF ITS EMPLOYEES
IN THE SHCHARANSKIY TRIAL AS WELL AS DECISION NOT
TO IMPOSE MAXIMUM PENALTY ARE PROBABLY VIEWED BY SOVIETS
AS HARMLESS CONCESSIONS TO U.S. FEELINGS, DESIGNED
TO TAKE SOME OF STING OUT OF THE STIFF SENTENCES
GIVEN TO THE THREE HELSINKI GROUP MEMBERS TRIED
LAST WEEK, AND THE AFFRONT CAUSED BY THE TIMING OF
THE TRIALS (JUST TWO DAYS PRIOR TO HIGH-LEVEL SALT
TALKS). ALL OF THESE EVENTS, PLUS THE FACT THAT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 17055 02 OF 03 210825Z

IN SOME CASES THE SENTENCE METED OUT WAS LESS THAN
THE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE OR CALLED FOR, SEEM PART OF
A SINGLE MESSAGE FROM THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP TO THE
U.S. WHICH WE WOULD PARAPHRASE AS FOLLOWS: HOW WE
(I.E. THE SOVIETS) HANDLE DISSIDENTS IS OUR OWN

BUSINESS. THE HELSINKI ACT NOTWITHSTANDING, INTERNAL DISSENT SHOULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN BILATERAL RELATIONS. WHEN YOU CHOOSE TO INVOLVE IT, YOU DO NOT HELP THE DISSIDENTS, YOU INTERFERE IN OUR INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY WORSENING OF RELATIONS WHICH OCCURS IN THIS CONNECTION. ON THE OTHER HAND, SUCH SENSITIVE MATTERS AS ESPIONAGE ACTIVITIES CAN HARM BILATERAL RELATIONS IF NOT HANDLED WITH TACT AND DISCRETION. OUR PUBLIC TREATMENT OF THE FILATOV AND SHCHARANSKIY CASES SHOWS HOW SUCH MATTERS SHOULD BE HANDLED. IF THAT METHOD IS NOT RECIPROCATED, OF COURSE, WE CAN RESPOND IN KIND TO YOUR PUBLIC ATTACKS.

5. THE QUESTION NOW IS WHETHER, HAVING PUBLICLY PILLORIED AND CONDEMNED THE HELSINKI GROUP MEMBERS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME DEMONSTRATING (IN ITS OWN MEDIA AT LEAST) THAT WESTERN PRESSURE CANNOT SUCCEED IN MODIFYING ITS POSITION, THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP WILL BE SATISFIED WITH ITS PUBLIC STAND AND THEREFORE MORE PREPARED TO TAKE PRACTICAL STEPS TO LIMIT THE FOREIGN POLICY COSTS OF ITS ACTIONS. WE HAVE NO BASIS FOR PREDICTING WHAT PRECISELY THE SOVIETS WILL DO, BUT OUR EXPERIENCE DOES SUGGEST THAT A SOVIET STANCE OF PUBLIC INTRANSIGENCE IS NOT NECESSARILY INCOMPATIBLE WITH WILLINGNESS TO BARGAIN IN PRIVATE.

6. EFFECT ON HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT. WE BELIEVE THAT OUR ANALYSIS IN REFTEL B, DONE SHORTLY AFTER THE RECENT SENTENCING OF REFUSENIK ACTIVISTS VLADIMIR

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 17055 03 OF 03 210838Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 HA-05 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 BIB-01 TRSE-00 /084 W
-----006012 210840Z /10

R 210754Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4590
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USNATO
USICA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 MOSCOW 17055

SLEPAK AND IDA NUDEL, REMAINS ESSENTIALLY VALID.
THE CURRENT TRIALS AND SENTENCES ARE PART OF AN
EXTENDED CAMPAIGN AGAINST DISSIDENCE, FOCUSED
PARTICULARLY ON THE CSCE MONITORING GROUPS, WHICH
WAS DECIDED UPON IN LATE 1976 OR EARLY 1977 WHEN THE
SOVIETS BECAME INCREASINGLY DISTRESSED OVER THE
CONFLUENCE OF THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS
REFLECTED IN THE FORMATION OF THESE GROUPS. ITS
TECHNIQUES HAVE INCLUDED IMPRISONMENT, INTERNAL
EXILE, HARASSMENT AND FORCED EMIGRATION. IT HAS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 17055 03 OF 03 210838Z

REMOVED FROM THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND REFUSENIK MOVEMENTS
MANY OF THEIR MOST ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE LEADERS,
WITH PREDICTABLE DAMAGING EFFECTS ON THE QUALITY
AND LEVEL OF ACTIVITY. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT THINK
THAT THIS ACTIVITY IS LIKELY TO STOP, GIVEN THE
CURRENT LEVEL OF REPRESSION. REFUSENIKS AND DISSIDENTS
ARE LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO CAUSE THE REGIME PERIODIC
FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS AND IT WILL RESPOND, WE THINK,
WITH SIMILAR TACTICS DIRECTED AGAINST ANY PARTICULARLY
ENERGETIC AND EFFECTIVE NEW LEADERS WHO EMERGE.

7. REFUSENIKS THEMSELVES HAVE TOLD US IN RECENT
DAYS THEY ARE WONDERING WHO WILL BE NEXT. THE
QUESTION THAT USUALLY ARISES IN THIS CONTEXT IS WHETHER
SAKHAROV MAY BE ARRESTED AT SOME POINT. WE DO NOT
THINK THAT SAKHAROV IS IMMUNE FROM ARREST,
BUT WE DO THINK THAT SOME ADDITIONAL LEVEL OF
ACTIVITY WHICH THE REGIME CONSIDERS PROVOCATIVE
WOULD HAVE TO OCCUR FIRST. EVEN THEN, IN OUR VIEW,
THE REGIME WOULD INITIALLY SIGNAL ITS DISPLEASURE
BOTH BY PRIVATE WARNINGS TO HIM BY INHIBITING HIS
CONTACT WITH WESTERNERS, AND BY PUBLIC ATTACKS
SEEKING TO UNDERMINE HIS REPUTATION. WHILE A FEW
SUCH SIGNALS HAVE BEEN GIVEN IN THE PAST, WE HAVE

SEEN NONE RECENTLY THAT WOULD INDICATE THAT THE
GROUND IS NOW BEING LAID FOR A SAKHAROV ARREST.

8. IMPLICATIONS FOR WESTERN DIPLOMATS AND JOURNALISTS.
THROUGHOUT THE CURRENT EIGHTEEN-MONTH-LONG CAMPAIGN
AGAINST REFUSENIK AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS, WE HAVE
HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT A MAJOR CONCERN OF THE
AUTHORITIES HAS BEEN TO BREAK THE LINKS BETWEEN
ACTIVISTS AND WESTERN DIPLOMATS AND JOURNALISTS.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 17055 03 OF 03 210838Z

THOSE LINKS PROVIDE THE WESTERN SUPPORT THE MOVE-
MENT NEEDS AND ENABLE IT TO DESSEMINATE ITS MESSAGE
THROUGHOUT THE SOVIET UNION VIA FOREIGN RADIO BROAD-
CASTS. THE CURRENT WAVE OF TRIALS, WITH THEIR
ATTACKS ON THE EVILS OF FOREIGN INFLUENCES AND THE
ALLEGATIONS THAT FORMER EMBASSY EMPLOYEES LEVITSKY
AND PRESEL AND U.S. CORRESPONDENT TOTH WERE INTELLI-
GENCE AGENTS, STRIKE AT THE TIES BETWEEN WESTERN
REPRESENTATIVES AND ACTIVISTS. THE TRIALS PUT THE
ACTIVISTS ON NOTICE THAT THEY ARE POTENTIALLY SUBJECT
TO CHARGES OF CONSORTING WITH FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE
AGENTS AND LET THE WESTERNERS KNOW THAT IF THEIR
RELATIONS WITH ACTIVISTS BECOME TOO CLOSE THEY MAY
FIND THEMSELVES EFFECTIVELY BARRED FROM FURTHER
WORK IN THE SOVIET UNION AND SMEARED AS ALLEGED
ESPIONAGE AGENTS. THE "SLANDER" PROCEEDINGS
AGAINST WHITNEY AND PIPER, INVOLVING THEIR COVERAGE
OF A DISSIDENT CASE, IS UNDOUBTEDLY ALSO INTENDED
TO WEAKEN TIES BETWEEN CORRESPONDENTS AND THEIR
UNOFFICIAL SOVIET SOURCES.

9. WE ARE REPORTING BY SEPTTEL OUR IMPRESSIONS OF
HOW THE SOVIETS HANDLED THE PUBLIC RELATIONS AND
PROPAGANDA ASPECTS OF THE TRIALS. MATLOCK

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEMBERSHIP, MONITORING, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, TRIALS, DISSIDENT FACTIONS, SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW17055
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780299-1221
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780734/aaaabcfq.tel
Line Count: 371
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d7e9146f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 MOSCOW 15961, 78 MOSCOW 15744, 77 MOSCOW 1978
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1927329
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE HELSINKI MONITORING GROUP TRIALS: AN EVALUATION
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, UR, CSCE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d7e9146f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014